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REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF CLAIMS,

ON

THE PETITION

OF THE

GOVERNORS OF THE [NEW-YORK HOSPITAL.]

JANUARY 27, 1814.

Read, and committed to a committee of the whole house
on Monday next.

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1814.

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REPORT.

The Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the memorial of the governors of the New York hospital, having had the same, with the accompanying papers, under their consideration, respectfully ask leave to

REPORT:

THAT by an act of congress passed on the 16th of July, 1798, a fund was authorized and directed to be raised for the relief of sick and disabled seamen, by a tax of twenty cents per month, on their wages, for the whole period of their employment. That by the said act the president was authorized to provide for the temporary relief and maintenance of such seamen as should be sick or disabled, in hospitals or other proper institutions. And the expenditure of money in one district, was expressly limited to the sum collected in the same. The president was further empowered to appoint, in the several ports, one or more persons to direct the expenditure of the fund, according to such instructions as should be given. The person appointed for this purpose in the port of New York, was the collector of the customs; who, in obedience to instructions, made provision for the support of seamen in the New York hospital, of which the memorialists are the superintendents; and in the month of November, 1804, *limited the number of disabled seamen*, for whose maintenance, in said hospital, the United States would hold themselves responsible. During every year since that period,

the memorialists have received into the hospital, a number of seamen exceeding the number allowed by the collector. For the support of these supernumerary seamen the memorialists, as directors of the institution, exhibit a claim of \$ 11,552 86 cents, against the United States.

Your committee ask leave to subjoin, as a part of their report, a letter addressed to them, upon this subject, by the acting secretary of the treasury, from which it appears, that from the year 1804 to the year 1813, inclusive, there was received at the port of New York, for the marine hospital fund, the sum of \$ 103,944 04 cents; and expended in the same port, from the said fund, in the same period, the sum of \$ 117,547 29 cents, making the balance expended in New York more than that which was collected \$ 13,603 25 cents.

It was difficult for your committee to conceive upon what ground compensation could be claimed by the memorialists, for the sum of \$ 11,552 86 cents, expended by them more than what was allowed by the directors of the marine hospital. It may be said that the fund was made general by the act of 1802, and thereby as its expenditure was no longer limited to the district in which it was created, an equitable demand arises to remuneration. But when it is recollected that there are many other districts in which a great tonnage (of course many seamen) are employed, the conclusion inevitably results, that the president could not, without a disregard to the interests of other portions of the union, authorize in one district an expenditure undue in proportion to the demands of others.

The memorialists seem strongly to rely upon the application of this fund to other purposes than that for which it was originally created. A portion of it, it is true, has been appropriated to the building of suitable public hospitals for the reception of seamen. But this appropriation has unquestionably been in

furtherance of the general beneficent objects of the original law. If the United States had violated the pledge which, in this instance, they had held out, it would certainly be a subject of serious complaint on the part of our seamen, but could have furnished no ground for reprehension, to any charitable institutions; the more particularly when all contracts with them, had been rigidly fulfilled by the United States.

Upon a review of all the circumstances which can possibly bear on the case, your committee are of opinion that the district of New York has received at least its due proportion of the fund for the support of seamen; and that the governors of the New York hospital, aware, as they acknowledge themselves to be, of the number of seamen for whose maintenance the government would hold itself responsible, have no claim, either legal or equitable, for the reception and support of supernumerary seamen.

On the expediency of increasing the marine hospital fund, for which the memorialists pray, your committee do not consider themselves authorized to speak, as the consideration of such a subject would be without the sphere of the duties assigned them by the house. They report the following resolution :

Resolved, That the prayer of the governors of the New York hospital, so far as the same relates to a compensation for the support of seamen, beyond that which they have already received, ought not to be granted.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

January 18, 1814.

SIR,

IN answer to your letter of the 15th instant, making certain inquiries relating to the petition of the governors of the New York hospital, I have the honor to state :

1. That the amount of monies received into the treasury, for the relief of sick and disabled seamen, from the year 1804 to the year 1812, including the sum of \$ 38,513 96 received within that period from the officers and seamen of the navy of the United States for this purpose, is \$ 506,536 41; and that, for the year 1813, the accounts are not received at the treasury, but the amount is estimated to be about \$ 22,000, making in the whole \$ 528,536 41, as will appear by the note at foot, marked (a).

2. That it is impossible to state the number of seamen, who, during the period above mentioned, have been supported or relieved from the above fund. Some of the accounts, rendered by the agents, do not specify the number relieved, but only the number under care, without noting the daily receptions and discharges. It is conceived, moreover, that this number, if it could be ascertained, would probably not be very material, when it is considered that a single individual has sometimes been supported out of this fund for years without intermission; and, frequently, others have required medical attention and relief for a few days only.

3. That the sum received for the above fund, at the port of New York, during the period above mentioned, is \$ 113,944 04, as will appear by the note at foot, marked (b). The year 1813 is an estimate, the accounts for that year not having been all received.

4. That the number of seamen to whom relief has been afforded in the port of New York, during the above period, is very difficult to ascertain, some individuals having continued to receive relief for several years in succession, some for a few days only, and others repeatedly, for various periods, and at various intervals. The particulars of this expenditure have been annually reported to congress for several years past; by which it appears that the average weekly cost to the United States of each seaman supported and relieved in the New York hospital, is three dollars and twenty-five cents. By the annexed note, marked (c), it will be seen that the total amount of the expenditures in the city of New York, from 1804 to 1813, inclusive, (the last quarter of the year 1813 being, however, upon estimate, as the accounts are not yet received) has been \$ 117,547 29. This will give an average of sixty-nine seamen, constantly receiving relief in that port during the whole of those ten years.

It may not be foreign to the inquiry which the committee is pursuing to state, that from the 1st of July, 1802, (when the marine hospital fund, in pursuance of the act of the 3d of May, 1802, became a general one) to the end of 1803, a period not embraced by your letter, there was received, including the sum unexpended at New York on the 30th of June, 1802, \$ 26,696 49, and expended only \$ 20,163 20; and the cost to the United States of the seamen supported and relieved in the New York hospital, is considerably less than in any other regular hospital in the United States.

I have the honor to be,
 Very respectfully, sir,
 Your most obedient servant,
 W. JONES,
Acting Secretary of the Treasury.

Hon. Stevenson Archer,
Chairman of the Committee of Claims.

(a) Note of monies received from the marine hospital fund, from the year 1804 to the year 1812, inclusive:

1804,	.	.	.	.	.	\$ 58,210 98
1805,	.	.	.	.	.	58,005 98
1806,	.	.	.	.	.	66,820 01
1807,	.	.	.	.	.	61,474 47
1808,	.	.	.	.	.	36,515 44
1809,	.	.	.	.	.	35,678 46
1810,	.	.	.	.	.	54,309 31
1811,	.	.	.	.	.	54,586 34
1812,	.	.	.	.	.	42,421 46
						<hr/>
						468,022 45
Received from the navy in 1809,						38,513 96
						<hr/>
						506,536 41
1813, estimated at	.	.	.	.	.	22,000
						<hr/>
						\$ 528,536 41
						<hr/> <hr/>

(b) Note of monies received for the marine hospital fund, at the port of New York, from the year 1804 to the year 1813, inclusive:

1804,	.	.	.	.	.	11,312 72
1805,	.	.	.	.	.	12,571 61
1806,	.	.	.	.	.	13,985 49
1807,	.	.	.	.	.	12,769 45
1808,	.	.	.	.	.	8,449 04
1809,	.	.	.	.	.	7,561 37
1810,	.	.	.	.	.	11,799 87
1811,	.	.	.	.	.	11,260 67
1812,	.	.	.	.	.	8,633 82
1813, (estimate),	.	.	.	.	.	5,600
						<hr/>
						\$ 103,944 04
						<hr/> <hr/>

(c) Note of the amount expended at New York for the relief of sick and disabled seamen, from the year 1804 to the year 1813, inclusive. [The fourth quarter of the year 1813 is on estimate.]

1804,	.	.	.	.	.	14,219	96
1805,	.	.	.	.	.	12,666	98
1806,	.	.	.	.	.	12,155	67
1807,	.	.	.	.	.	11,514	79
1808,	.	.	.	.	.	12,567	97
1809,	.	.	.	.	.	10,907	61
1810,	.	.	.	.	.	10,733	03
1811,	.	.	.	.	.	11,861	64
1812,	.	.	.	.	.	11,091	69
1813,	.	.	.	.	.	9,827	95

\$ 117,547 29
